

A verbal is a verb form which functions as a noun or an adjective. In English, there are three types of verbals: Participles (past participles and present participles), Gerunds, and Infinitives.

1. Participles

A participle is a verb form which functions as an adjective.

There are two types of participles: the present participle (ending *ing*) and the past participle (usually ending *-ed*, *-d*, *-t*, *-en*, or *-n*).

Here are some participles being used as adjectives:

The Verb	The Present Participle	The Past Participle
To bake	the baking bread	the baked bread
To print	the printing document	the printed document
To lower	the lowering prices	the lowered prices

Here are some real-life examples:

- A **stirring** dwarf we do allowance give before a **sleeping** giant. (William Shakespeare, 1564-1616) (Two present participles)
- Food is an important part of a **balanced** diet. (Fran Lebowitz) (A past participle)

Often, a participle will head up a participle phrase which functions as an adjective. In the examples below, all participles are in bold and the participle phrases are shaded.

- **Drooling** saliva over the day's mail, the **barking** boxer quickly singled out the parcel from the bills and junk mail.

(This example has two present participles. The first heads up a participle phrase that describes *the barking boxer*. The second modifies *boxer* in the normal way.)

- **Baked** in the oven for over six hours, the roast was **ruined**. (This example has two past participles. The first heads up a participle phrase that describes *the roast*. The second describes the roast as a subject complement.)

2. Gerunds

Even though gerunds look like present participles (i.e., they also end *-ing*), a gerund is a noun not an adjective. Here are some examples of gerunds (shaded):

You don't stop **laughing** because you grow old. You grow old because you stop **laughing**. (Michael Pritchard)

Discovery consists of **seeing** what everybody has seen and **thinking** what nobody has thought. (Albert Szent-Gyorgyi, 1893-1986)

I have never taken any exercise except **sleeping** and **resting**. (Mark Twain, 1835-1910)

A gerund will often appear in a gerund phrase. A gerund phrase consists of a gerund, its object, and all modifiers. For example (gerunds in bold with the gerund phrases shaded):

- **Singing** the words out loud helped him with his stammer.
- I started by **photographing** birds in my garden.

Infinitives

An infinitive is a verb form (often preceded by *to*, e.g., *to dance*, *to sing*) which can function as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb. For example:

An infinitive as a noun:

- **To win** was everything. (The infinitive is the subject of the verb *was*.)

Compare it to this:

- **Winning** was everything. (This proves that the infinitive *to win* is being used a noun.)

An infinitive as an adjective:

- It is an appropriate manner **to propose**. (The infinitive modifies *manner*. This means it is functioning as an adjective.)

Compare it to this:

- It is an appropriate saving **that he proposed**. (The clause *that he proposed* is an adjective clause. This proves that the infinitive *to propose* is being used an adjective.)

An infinitive as an adverb:

- The man paid **to watch**. (The infinitive modifies the verb *paid*. This means it is functioning as an adverb.)

Compare it to this:

- The man paid **so he could watch**. (The clause *so he could watch* is an adverbial clause. This proves that the infinitive *to watch* is being used an adverb.)

An infinitive will often appear in a infinitive phrase. An infinitive phrase consists of the infinitive and any objects and modifiers. For example (infinitives in bold with the infinitive phrases shaded):

- She needed **to find** a lot of money quickly. (The infinitive phrase is being used as a noun.)
- I showed her the best way **to make** a Yorkshire pudding. (The infinitive phrase is being used as an adjective.)
- He set the camera **to film** whatever was eating his chickens. (The infinitive phrase is being used as an adverb.)

Taken from <http://www.grammar-monster.com/glossary/verbals.htm>

Practice: In each sentence, find the subject, the verb, and any verbals. Identify the type of verbal.

1. Running is hard work!
2. The baked bread smelled amazing!
3. After my voice lessons, my singing improved dramatically.
4. To find buried treasure with my metal detector is my dream!
5. I could see the blowing trees out my window.
6. Living in the US is a wonderful opportunity many wish to have.
7. The laughing old woman pointed her finger at me!
8. The endorsed candidate, David Wilson, wants to raise taxes and to fight homelessness.
9. Portraying George Washington was his greatest accomplishment.
10. A charred steak sat in the middle of the grille; to eat it would be insane!